



DSD RenewablesSA

16 October 2015

## **RE: LOW CARBON INVESTMENT PLAN FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

The Central Region of Councils, Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North and the Northern and Yorke Natural Resources Management Board (the Regional Alliance) are working collaboratively to provide coordination and leadership and promote a 'whole of community', inter-agency approach to climate change adaptation (including low carbon investment) across the region.

The Regional Alliance commends the State Government on the leadership shown through the low carbon generation investment target and the development of the Low Carbon Investment Plan Strategy Paper.

The case studies presented in the strategy paper are all supported. The following are of particular interest to the Yorke & Mid North region:

- Bio-energy roadmap/enhanced stage 3;
- Mobile energy storage test facility; and
- Sundrop farms R&D facilitation.

Criteria used to assess new initiatives align with some of the state's existing strategic priorities. However, consideration also needs to be given to community preferences and social and environmental impacts, in response to priorities of, 'keep our communities safe and our citizens healthy' and 'build our reputation for premium food and wine'. It is important that there be sustained and shared benefits across the communities that live with the long-term impacts of development.

While work has been done to improve the land use planning system in relation to wind farm development, Development Plans do not sufficiently cover other types of renewable energy development. Local Governments will require support to ensure appropriate provisions are met.

"Case Study 2 – Investment attraction and case management" will be important in facilitating projects. On-ground regional resources will also be important in working with communities to gain support, resolve concerns and identify value-add opportunities.

Relevant comments made in relation to the Climate Change Strategy consultation papers are also provided below. These particularly raise the need for investment in regional leadership and community capacity and pre-commercial technologies.

### **Innovate**

- Support for 'farm' and local scale innovation

Focus on industry is appropriate but need to ensure 'small business' is included along with community groups and individuals. Much of agriculture innovation occurs at the farm level. Incentives and support in the form of on-ground networks (such as Farming System Groups) and research partnerships are vital to enabling innovation to occur and to be taken up more widely.

Yorke & Mid North has initiated the Goyder's Line Sustainability Hub to support regional innovation.

- Invest in community capacity, knowledge and leadership

The Regional Alliance project 'Making Yorke & Mid North Low Carbon Ready' clearly identified

community capacity and leadership as a key barrier to low carbon investment in the region. An initial focus on building community capacity (knowledge, experience, acceptance of renewable energy) is important to better position regional areas to attract new industry. Local leadership and the role of regional agencies in brokering opportunities are also vital.

Education in schools will prepare youth for future employment in low carbon economy.

- Support research of new enterprises/opportunities through to commercialisation

New enterprises such as algae derived crude oil and other products, blue carbon and low energy wave technologies present opportunities that harness the unique resources of the Yorke & Mid North region and complement existing industry. Trials and field research in regional areas and partnerships between regional communities and research organisations help to build community understanding of 'low carbon' and fosters wider innovation.

- Holistic/integrated approach to transitioning regional areas

The effects of international markets and changes in farming models have already significantly impacted a number of communities throughout the Yorke & Mid North. Ongoing changes in climate will increase the vulnerability of these communities. In the longer-term, adapting to maintain 'existing' economies and community functions may become unviable.

There is an opportunity to support these susceptible communities now (while there is sufficient local capacity) and transition these communities in a holistic way to low carbon economy.

## **Reduce**

- Communicate the case for reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

A State lead household level campaign is required to reinforce the need to reduce emissions and opportunities for low carbon economy.

- Invest in community capacity, knowledge and leadership

Similarly to 'Innovate' above, it is important for communities to form opinions and long-term visions based on credible information sources.

- Renewable energy development supports regional and local vision and needs

Renewable energy development is important in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions but also in job creation and potential cost savings to individuals and industry.

The 'Making Yorke & Mid North Low Carbon Ready' project provided a preliminary assessment of community preferences which included some interest in off-grid, community owned power generation.

There is a number of developing renewable energy projects earmarked for Yorke & Mid North that could be pursued if community support and broader community benefit exists. Initial community engagement regarding the Yorke Biomass Energy Project indicates a level of community acceptance justifying further consideration.

- Support for small-scale projects and trials

While these projects may not result in high reductions in emissions, they provide a basis for building community understanding and help to identify and resolve any potential concerns around larger-scale development.

- Identify and develop local/regional skills to meet demands of low carbon energy generation and industry
- Address risk factors arising from the lack of specific Development Plan descriptions of renewable energy generation

The region has learnt through experience with wind farm development, the importance of specific Development Plan descriptions for renewable energy. Additional policy library content would be required for other renewable/low carbon development (as side from wind and roof top solar PV).

- Support research of new enterprises/opportunities through to commercialisation

As for 'Innovate' above. This would also include the development and testing of battery storage.

- Support for New Horizons Program and bio-energy road map
- Investigate 'low carbon' transport options for regional areas and truck route efficiencies

Yorke & Mid North communities are heavily reliant on private transport. Reliable and cost effective transport options are important to maintaining a connected community that can access services.

Similarly, industries are also reliant on the cost effective movement of commodities.

- Improve communications to reduce the need to travel

Mobile phone black spots, low broadband penetration and average internet connection speeds continued to be a barrier to using communications for work, education and health services and ongoing reliance on travel to meet face to face.

In 2014, the Regional Alliance partnered with the International Energy Policy Institute, University College London Australia to deliver the project "Making Yorke and Mid North Low Carbon Investment Ready". A copy of the project report is attached.

The Yorke & Mid North Strategic Alliance and Climate Change Steering Committee are committed to its leading role in climate change action for the region and the security, sustainability and prosperity of all South Australia. We look forward to low carbon investment that supports the adaptation of the region.

Yours sincerely

**Mayor Peter Matthey**

Chair  
Central Local Government Region of Councils

**Eric Sommerville**

Presiding Member  
Northern & Yorke Natural Resources  
Management Board

**Ms Kay Mathias**

Chair  
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